

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2694

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Higher Education

**Title:** An act relating to a bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center.

**Brief Description:** Regarding a bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sells, White, McCoy, Kenney, Ericks, O'Brien, Roberts and Chase.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 1/20/10, 1/22/10 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Recognizes a shortage of registered nurses in the state and, subject to specific funding for this purpose, directs the University Center at Everett Community College, in partnership with the University of Washington-Bothell, to offer a bachelor of science in nursing program with capacity for at least 50 full-time students.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

**Background:**

Management and leadership responsibility for the north Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties' higher education consortium is assigned, in statute, to Everett Community College (ECC). The ECC is charged with collaborating with community and business leaders, other local community colleges, the public four-year institutions, and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to develop an educational plan for the region based on the university center model. In April of 2009, Gray Wolf Hall opened as the new home of the

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University Center of North Puget Sound. The University Center at ECC currently offers over 20 bachelor's and master's degrees from six partner universities.

The ECC offers an associate degree nursing program that graduates approximately 70 to 90 students per year. The University Center at ECC does not offer a bachelor of science in nursing. There is a bachelor of science in nursing program offered by the University of Washington-Bothell at its Bothell campus and at Skagit Community College.

Despite recent growth in nursing education capacity, shortages still persist for registered nurses. According to a June 2007 study by the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) Center for Health Workforce Studies, the average age of Washington's registered nurses was 48 years. More than a third were 55 years of age or older. In light of the age demographics, it was predicted that there would be a high rate of registered nurses retiring from nursing practice over the next two decades which will significantly reduce the supply. This reduction comes at the same time as the state's population grows and ages. The registered nurse education capacity in Washington impacts the supply of registered nurses in the state. If the rate of graduation in registered nursing does not increase, projections show that supply in Washington will begin to decline by 2015. In contrast, if graduation rates increased by 400 per year, the supply of registered nurses would meet estimated demand by the year 2021.

The HECB's Employer Demand Joint Report 2009 Update of *A Skilled and Educated Workforce* showed an annual supply of 2,912 registered nurses, with 3,019 additional registered nurses needed to meet the average annual demand for 2004-2014.

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**Summary of Bill:**

Subject to specific funding for 50 students, the University Center at ECC, in partnership with the University of Washington-Bothell, shall offer a bachelor of science in nursing program for 50 students.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The University Center at ECC was approved some time ago for 250 full-time equivalents at the upper-division and graduate levels. The Center is already at 285, in a variety of programs. There is a great need for more registered nurses in the community. Providence operates a 350 bed hospital and Swedish is coming to the neighborhood. There is

also a need at our higher-education institutions for nurses with master's degrees to teach in the nursing programs. The addition of 50 new slots for bachelor of science in nursing degrees will go a long way to helping to meet these needs. Some graduates may choose to go to work in the community while others may choose to go on to get their master's degree and come to work at the higher-education institutions. The University of Washington-Bothell has a program at its Bothell campus as well as at Skagit Community College but these are overenrolled. A new bachelor of science in nursing program at the University Center at ECC would be located in existing buildings and use existing capacity. People that are educated in the area tend to stay in the area and work. Hospital nursing staff is aging and there is a need for more nurses with bachelor's degrees. Over 200 currently employed at Providence in Everett have expressed interest in such a program.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Christine Kerlin and Stu Barger, University Center at Everett Community College; Kelly Snyder, University of Washington-Bothell; and Janine Holbrook, Providence-Everett.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.